

VZCZCXRO2012

OO RUEHAO RUEHCD RUEHGA RUEHGD RUEHHA RUEHHO RUEHMC RUEHMT RUEHNG  
RUEHNL RUEHQU RUEHRD RUEHRG RUEHRS RUEHTM RUEHVC  
DE RUEHSG #0254/01 0761804  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 171804Z MAR 09  
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4657  
INFO RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SANTIAGO 000254

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/BSC--CATO AND CROFT, WHA/AND, WHA/CAR,  
PM/RSAT--BURNETT  
PENTAGON FOR KRISTI HUNT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/16/2019

TAGS: [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [XR](#) [CI](#)

SUBJECT: BRAZIL, CHILE LED EFFORT TO CREATE NEW UNASUR  
DEFENSE COUNCIL

REF: SANTIAGO 239

Classified By: Political Officer Jennifer Spande for reason 1.4 (b).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Brazil and Chile played leading roles in creating the new South American Defense Council (SADC), which was inaugurated last week at a meeting of all 12 UNASUR Defense Ministers in Santiago. The new body, which is not/not a military alliance, aims to develop relationships and build trust in the region through a series of concrete action items ranging from cataloging regional humanitarian assistance capabilities to creating a new South American Center for Strategic Defense Studies. Ecuador will assume responsibility for directing the SADC in May, when it becomes president pro-tempore of UNASUR. End Summary.

Brazil, Chile Collaborate to Create New Defense Body

¶2. (C) Last week's formal establishment of the South American Defense Council (SADC) was the end of a year-long effort initiated by Brazilian President Lula and brought to fruition with assistance from Brazilian Defense Minister Jobim, Chilean President Bachelet, and Chilean Defense Undersecretary Garcia. Contacts from the Defense and Foreign Affairs Ministries told Poloff and DATT March 13 that Lula conceived of the group in May 2008 and Defense Minister Jobim visited each UNASUR capital to sell the idea. (Note: The group is known in Spanish as the Consejo de Defensa Suramericano (CDS). End Note.)

¶3. (C) Chilean officials told emboffs that the March 9 and 10 negotiations formally establishing the body and agreeing to a declaration of principles and action plan were relatively quick and straightforward. The hard work, they said, took place earlier in the year in getting all 12 UNASUR nations to participate. MOD advisor Juan Esteban Montes said that Peru, Colombia, and Venezuela were the most hesitant to sign on to the new organization. Bachelet and Lula both reached out to Peruvian President Garcia and persuaded him to join. Colombia and Venezuela were both reluctant to be part of a defense organization that would include the other, and Colombian President Uribe insisted that language rejecting the "presence or action" of extra-legal armed groups be included in the declaration. Chilean Undersecretary for Defense Gonzalo Garcia and his staff took the lead in drafting the SADC documents and action plan.

¶4. (C) Emboffs noted that Brazil had suggested the creation of the SADC and proposed that the body promote the development of a South American defense industry, but then

appeared to be disengaged from the actual work of this initiative. According to the Action Plan, Ecuador will lead efforts to assess the defense industries of UNASUR members, while Venezuela will promote bilateral and multilateral initiatives to increase defense industry cooperation. Montes indicated that the Brazilians were savvy in advancing their interest in a regional defense industry, suggesting but not pushing it too hard, and allowing other countries to take the lead. Brazil knows well its relatively advanced defense industry would have to be a focal point for any cooperation.

#### Action Plan to Build Trust and Communication

-----

¶5. (C) The SADC is designed to build confidence, transparency, and open communication, Chilean defense and foreign affairs officials said. They highlighted that the action plan items (which include cooperation in defense policy, peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance, defense industry and technology, and training) are less important individually and best seen as ways to encourage dialogue and build relationships. MFA officials noted that Bolivia was particularly interested in disaster response issues and Argentina was focused on training. Montes said he believed the creation of a South American Center for Strategic Defense Studies (CSEED--Centro Suramericano de Estudios Estrategicos de Defensa) in Buenos Aires was the most significant individual action to come out of the SADC action plan. The action plan also envisions regular South American Strategic Studies forums, the first of which is tentatively scheduled for November 11-13, 2009, in Rio de Janeiro.

¶6. (SBU) The Chileans are clearly quite proud of their role

SANTIAGO 00000254 002 OF 002

in bringing SADC to fruition. Former Chilean Defense Minister Goni described the creation of the SADC as a "historic landmark" which, along with the September 2008 summit on the crisis in Pando Department, Bolivia, was one of Chile's key achievements during its year-long tenure as UNASUR president pro-tempore. Responsibility for directing SADC will now pass to Ecuador, who assumes the president pro-tempore role in May.

¶7. (SBU) Post has electronic copies of the SADC Final Declaration, SADC Statue, and SADC Action Plan Matrix in Spanish and will email to political section chiefs in UNASUR capitals and Washington officials listed in pass line. Any other officials wishing to have a copy should contact Political Officer Jennifer Spande at spandejs@state.gov.

Comment

¶8. (C) Once again Chile is punching above its weight class in efforts to build trust and reduce conflict in South America. Defense Ministers were quick to clarify that the SADC is not/not "NATO South," and in fact there is no grand overarching project that the SADC is aiming to achieve. Yet, there is value in the incremental approach that the 12 nations are taking to increase transparency and build relations among each other. Last week's SADC meeting was the first time all of the continents' Defense Ministers had met together, and such efforts to foster open communication are welcome in a region with many perennial inter-state disputes.

End Comment.

SIMONS